

VZCZCXRO9907
RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0233 0401746
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 091746Z FEB 10
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7509
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/JCS WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000233

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, SEMEP, AND NEA/IPA; NSC FOR
SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/09/2020
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAELI TRAVEL BAN AGAINST PROMINENT EAST
JERUSALEM CARTOGRAPHER

Classified By: Consul General Daniel Rubinstein
for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) On February 9, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad contacted the Consul General to express strong concern about the Israeli government's imposition of a six-month overseas travel ban on Khalil Tufakji, an Arab resident of East Jerusalem and prominent cartographer, as reported in the Israeli daily Haaretz and other media on February 8. Tufakji, a frequent international lecturer on the physical and political geography of the Palestinian territories, told DepPolChief on January 9 that several days previously, he had received a letter from the Israeli Ministry of the Interior informing him that for "reasons of security" he would not be permitted to travel abroad for six months.

¶2. (C) Tufakji expressed bafflement when asked about the travel ban, noting that he had been a regular participant in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations since 1992. In addition, he claimed to have received written assurances from the Israeli Interior Ministry in 2007 that no derogatory security information was associated with his name. "I'm not a violent man, I'm not even a religious man. I'm a peace man," he told DepPolChief, "and this is widely known."

¶3. (C) Tufakji said he was in touch with the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, an NGO also known as Adalah, and had requested its assistance in preparing an appeal. He said he was optimistic about the prospects for a successful legal challenge, noting that the travel ban was issued under British Mandate-era emergency legislation.

¶4. (C) Tufakji expressed skepticism about various explanations offered by Palestinian colleagues and Post contacts for the travel ban, ranging from his frequent travel across North Africa and the Levant to his position as head of mapping for the Arab Studies Institute at Orient House, which along with other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem has been closed since 2001. Note: The Roadmap calls on the Israeli government to reopen these institutions. End Note. "Look, I've been lecturing for years," he said, "in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Syria. I've been with Orient House all this time. What's different now?" Noting the absence of any official explanation for the travel ban, Tufakji said, "Truthfully, I'm surprised. And if you read the papers, most of Israel is surprised about this issue too."

RUBINSTEIN